

MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
17 APRIL 1963

AM

9:30

I. CONVENE, ROOM 7000, INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING

II. SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS-INTERVIEWS

9:35

1. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service
(Mr. Karel H. Yasko, Assistant Commissioner of Design and Construction, Public Buildings Service, General Services Administration)

Federal Office Building No. 5, Independence Avenue at 10th Street, S.E. - Proposed Design

10:30

2. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

- a. Memorial to Taras Shevchenko - Proposed design of site plan and statue

(Dr. Lev E. Dobriansky, Liaison Officer, Shevchenko Memorial Committee; Mr. Joseph LeSawyer, Executive Director, Shevchenko Memorial Committee; Dr. Eric Larson, Art Historian Critic; Mr. Leo Mol, Sculptor; Mr. T. Sutton Jett, Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service; Mr. Robert C. Horne, Associate Regional Director)

- b. Jefferson Memorial - Proposed Handrails and Lighting for Steps (Mr. Jett and Mr. Horne)

- c. Lincoln Memorial - Proposed Handrails and Lighting for Steps (Mr. Jett and Mr. Horne)

11:30

3. District of Columbia Government

- a. Department of Buildings and Grounds

(Mr. G.A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, Dept. of Bldgs. & Grounds
Lt Col. John A. Israelson, Asst. Engineer Commissioner, D.C.)

Harbor Precinct Replacement, Maine Avenue & N St., S.W.-
Proposed Design

11:45

- b. Department of Licenses & Inspections

(Mr. J.P. Green, Assistant Superintendent of Licenses and Permits; Mr. Julian E. Berla, architect)

Preliminary Shipstead-Luce Submission: Proposed office building at 633 Indiana Avenue, N.W. - Revised Design

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of
17 April 1963

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MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

17 April 1963

The Commission met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m., with David E. Finley, Chairman, presiding.

Present were: Members: David E. Finley
Felix de Weldon
Peter Hurd
William G. Perry
Hideo Sasaki
Ralph Walker

Staff: L.R. Wilson, Executive Secretary
C.H. Atherton, Asst. Secretary
C.L. Martin, Counsel
Susan Bennett, Admin. Asst.
Myra Younker, Editor
Leone Vialpando, Recorder

I. SUBMISSIONS-REVIEWS-INTERVIEWS

1. General Services Administration, Public Buildings Service

Federal Office Building No. 5, Independence Avenue at 10th Street,
S.W. - Proposed Design

The Commission conferred with Mr. Karel H. Yasko, Assistant Commissioner of Design and Construction, Mr. J. Rowland Snyder, Director, Design Division, Public Buildings Service, and Mr. Nathaniel Curtis, Jr., architect of Curtis and Davis to discuss a proposed design of the building.

Mr. Curtis reviewed the progressive steps in designing the building subsequent to December, 1961 when the Commission approved the general massing of the building elements and the proposal that it span 10th Street. He then explained the interior and exterior features of the proposed design using projected slides, drawings, and a scale model. He explained that the presentation was primarily for the purpose of seeking the Commission's advice on the exterior appearance of the building.

In the general discussion which followed the members commented favorably upon the development of the site plan and the proposed methods to lighten the appearance of the mass of the tower building by elevating it. However, they expressed the opinion that the proposal to construct the tower building entirely of glass was inappropriate for the location and that this element should be primarily a masonry structure. The transcript of this discussion is EXHIBIT A¹.

Following the discussion with the architect and the Public Buildings Service representative the members discussed the nature of the Commission's report to the General Services Administration. It was concluded that the report should stress the Commission's view that the monumental composition of the Mall

should be completed, and that the concept of the proposed design was fundamentally opposed to this principle.

EXHIBIT A 2

2. Department of the Interior, National Park Service

a. Memorial to Taras Shevchenko - Proposed Design of Site Plan and Statue

The Commission conferred with Dr. Lev E. Dobriansky, Liaison Officer, Mr. Joseph Le Sawyer, Executive Director, Taras Shevchenko Memorial Committee, Dr. Eric Larson, Art Historian Critic, Mr. Leo Mol, Sculptor, Mr. Radoslav Zuk, Architect, and Mr. T. Sutton Jett, Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service, who presented a proposed site plan and sculpture for the memorial.

Mr. Mol presented a scale study model of a proposed statue of Shevchenko and a bas-relief wall, both of which would be placed on raised granite steps and placed facing south on an extended paved sandstone terrace at the northern end of the site. He explained that the statue in bronze would be 14 feet tall, the granite base 4 1/2 feet by 4 1/2 feet by 7 feet, and the overall height of the monument approximately 22 feet. The granite bas-relief wall bore a figure of Prometheus, the main theme of the memorial.

Mr. Zuk described the site plan and explained the changes made to an original plan in the landscaping of the site near P Street following consultation with the National Capital Planning Commission designed to screen the sitting area from traffic and from an existing gasoline station.

Mr. Sasaki outlined the members' suggestions for changes to the site plan which were discussed at the meeting on the previous day and the Commission voted to approve the basic design of the memorial with the incorporation of those suggestions.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the Director of the National Park Service setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT B

b. Jefferson Memorial - Proposed Handrails and Lighting for Steps

c. Lincoln Memorial - Proposed Handrails and Lighting for Steps

Mr. T. Sutton Jett, Regional Director, National Capital Region, explained to the members that the National Park Service was seeking the Commission's advice on whether or not handrails should be installed on the steps of the two memorials, what type of rail was recommended, and should the rails be lighted. He pointed out that 42 reported falls had occurred at the Lincoln Memorial since 1948 in which medical attention was required, and that many other persons probably stumbled or fell but left without reporting the incident to Park Service personnel. Lighting the steps had been suggested in view of the fact that the memorials are open to the public after dark and at times until midnight.

The members expressed the opinion that it would be possible to install handrails of a simple design which would be inconspicuous and in keeping with the design of the memorials. They were opposed to incorporating lighting fixtures in the rails because of the effect upon the dramatic approach to the memorials at night which are lighted only in the interiors. They suggested that attendants at the memorials could either light the way down the steps for visitors or direct them to the rails.

It was agreed that the Park Service would study the problem and submit proposed designs for a railing at a later date.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the Director of the National Park Service setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT C

3. District of Columbia Government

a. Department of Buildings and Grounds

Harbor Precinct Replacement, Maine Avenue and N Street, S.W. - Proposed Design

Mr. G.A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, Department of Buildings and Grounds presented plans and a rendering of a design for proposed new boat slips for the docking of Police and Fire Department boats at Pier 5, N Street and Maine Avenue, S.W.

The members thought that the design was particularly appropriate and complimented Mr. Purcell on the quality of the drawings. The design was approved as presented.

The Chairman was authorized to send a letter to the Engineer Commissioner for the District of Columbia setting forth the Commission's views. EXHIBIT D

b. Department of Licenses and Inspections

(1) Preliminary Submission - Shipstead-Luce Act. Proposed Office Building at 633 Indiana Avenue, N.W. - Revised Design

The Commission met with Mr. Julian E. Berla, architect of Berla and Abel, and Mr. J. P. Green, Assistant Superintendent of Licenses and Permits, to discuss plans for the design of a proposed office building at Indiana Avenue and Sixth Street, N.W. At the March 19, 1963 meeting the Commission had examined and disapproved an application for building permit (S.L. 2589) because it was felt the architectural character of the proposed building was too commercial. At that time the Commission requested the design be restudied with respect to scale and materials in order to achieve a character more harmonious with the general architectural treatment of the nearby federal areas.

It was pointed out to Mr. Berla that the Commission had thought the building should not be a typical office building because of its proximity to the National Gallery of Art and other federal buildings. For this reason they had disapproved the original design. They suggested that the building should be given a masonry treatment and the penthouse be restudied to achieve a more unified form as opposed to the jagged silhouette shown in the original design.

Mr. Berla showed the members a number of studies of alternative masonry treatment for the Indiana Avenue facade. After examining the studies the members agreed on one of the designs which they believed could be developed into a satisfactory scheme with further study. There was a general discussion of various aspects of the design with particular emphasis on improving the appearance of the penthouse superstructure.

It was agreed that Mr. Berla would submit revised drawings through the Department of Licenses and Inspections incorporating the Commission's recommendations at an early date.

(2) Shipstead-Luce Act Submission - Apartment Building at 1845 Harvard Street, N.W. - Revised Design

Mr. Vernon C. Elmore, architect of Corning, Moore, Elmore and Fischer, Mr. Boris Timchenko, landscape architect, and Mr. J. P. Green, Assistant Superintendent of Licenses and Permits, conferred with the Commission on a revised site plan for an apartment building at 1845 Harvard Street, N.W.

Mr. Green stated that Mr. Elmore had prepared drawings illustrating proposed landscaping and a terrace on the Harvard Street side of the site as requested by the Commission at its meeting on February 19, 1963.

Mr. Elmore presented the drawings and commented that the landscaping had been arranged in such a way that the retaining wall for the terrace would not be visible from Harvard Street when the building was completed.

The members commented that the Commission was primarily interested in knowing whether the terrace proposed would be sufficiently high to meet the requirement that it screen the building from the entrance to the Zoological Park. They stated that the rendering presented showed the wall indistinctly located behind a large mass of shrubbery and trees and did not give a clear picture of what was proposed. They asked Mr. Elmore to submit drawings indicating the appearance of the terrace from Harvard Street without the proposed landscaping.

Mr. Elmore was asked why he had not submitted studies showing how the building might be located on the southeastern side of the lot as had been suggested at the February meeting, and what would the effect be

if this change were made.

Mr. Elmore replied that because of the changes in grades and contours, moving the building would create economic problems, but more important, to do so would mean the loss of benefits in zoning which would affect the financial basis of the entire project. It was explained that under the Zoning Regulations of the District of Columbia where a building fronts on more than one street the owner may select whichever street he chooses as the "front" of the building and the maximum permissible height of the building is determined at some point along that street. In this case Mr. Elmore stated the owner elected to designate the "front" of the building as being adjacent to Irving Street on the narrow northwestern end of the sloping lot. As a result, permission was given to construct a building four stories in height on the upper level and an additional five stories were gained because of the sloping characteristic of the site. If the building were located on the eastern end of the site the building "front" would necessarily be on Harvard Street and the height of the building would be limited to four stories thereby causing the owners to lose the advantage of the added five stories.

After discussing the matter the members concluded that under the circumstances, the Commission apparently could not recommend that the building be moved on the site, and therefore restricted their attention to the development of a suitable terrace near Harvard Street. Mr. Elmore was requested to submit new drawings clarifying the nature of the proposed terrace.

Final action was postponed until the submission of new drawings.

Thereupon, at 1:00 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

C. L. Martin

CL. Martin, Counsel

MR. CURTIS: I might say that the budget for our building, I believe I'm right about this--at least we have looked at it this way: The government knows what the last buildings they built for Health, Education and Welfare, 10 A and 10 B, and they also have a tremendous amount of data on costs per square foot, and so forth. So I suspect when the data on this building were established, it was established on the history of the cost system, and so forth, of those buildings.

As Mr. Dibner said, the cost of air conditioning is almost exactly what the budget was. It costs no more than other buildings.

MR. PERRY: This falls within previous experience; your square foot coefficient is right on the button to heat the building?

MR. CURTIS: Yes, that's right.

MR. YASKO: I insert a question and would like some expression from the Commission and, I hope, encouragement on this idea (indicating on model) of bringing this into the whole plaza which would also take Independence Avenue into account--this expression here--triangle here, triangle here, and the idea of taking the Avenue into the plaza is a deliberate design.

MR. SASAKI: I think so far as the site plan goes, it is very well handled and is a logical termination of this

MR. SASAKI: I think so far as the site plan goes,

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axis and an indication of a nodal area here, so I think the total composition here is most excellently done.

The architects, I think, ought to be complimented on their handling of the space.

The thing that worries me is that in spite of the fact you tried to and you did make a point, is the sudden disruption, really, of the continuity of adjacent buildings along this Avenue at that point. I think there can something be said for harmony of a thing, as well as the contrast; and the spacial experience here is very good. It is the right attitude. I think the lower buildings being masonry will help to tie them together, but I worry somewhat about the upper building which means suddenly all flatness and might be disruptive.

MR. YASKO: These are small elements (indicating) with masonry outline; next we come to we are fading out--we have a recall in this thing (indicating) of masonry.

MR. SASAKI: So again, please understand me--I think the scheme has been very thoughtfully evolved and in many ways it is very ingenious and to itself it is very logical. However, when you come up with a certain premise, then you come up with a certain conclusion, which gives you this sort of building and then this fenestration would be logical; but a building can also be looked at in another way. It can be looked at first in the way of a context and then arrive at

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Washington, I think, is a peculiar place because of all the cities we know here in the United States, we hope this will be the situation in all cities, but we know this isn't so, especially in our society but here in Washington it seems to me all of us here in this room have a larger responsibility--it is a responsibility to evaluate these things wisely.

As I said, the architects, I am sure, have very conscientiously striven with this problem but the conclusion that you arrive at, as you have said, distresses me a little bit because you are using steel and glass as mentioned, but then the exterior is also aluminum and glass. Now, when you look at the city, especially in the monumental area, this is not the characteristic thing, so it seems to me a remote conclusion to come to.

Now, I think I could safely defend the scheme if I were defending it, but a person has to assume, I think, a point of departure in evaluation and I think our comments have to be expressed from a certain point of view and so these are reactions that I have.

I'd like Mr. Perry and Mr. Walker also to comment.

MR. PERRY: We did some mental searching, realizing the importance and the continuity with which this group of

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buildings have been related to buildings of a previous era. The development itself west, the impact of the wall of buildings which, as Mr. Curtis says, very properly form almost a wall between the city and the Southwest--the Mall and the Southwest, which may be an advantage but anyway, a Mall. Now, here is this very ingenious contribution to what I call "levitation," in other words, lightness of this building designed by yourself with this 60-foot span, and the 30-foot cantilever. It makes a unit of this building; however long you may go, it still retains its form of unit and that is a very important point.

Actually, again just thinking aloud, yesterday we did have in mind whether we liked 10 or 10 A is entirely irrelevant. It's there. So are mandatory conditions. And as Mr. Sasaki has said, there's all that point of view. You come and you are relieved by a contrast. On the other hand, you may be consoled by the lack of it, so it depends on the point of view as you proceed.

I am a very careful student of long-term settings, as you are, abroad; and the amazing element of repose which is something which we recognize here as something that the architects tried very hard to achieve. Now, reposing one building is one thing. Reposing the complex of many buildings already existing is possibly another. In other words, a contributory characteristic here.

So, certainly, I wouldn't be disturbed very much

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by putting in a reposeful building, but the question is whether the building itself is in repose with the others. Now, considering the facts we were thinking aloud, it occurred to some of us yesterday that the suggestion might be made and it takes this form: Consider, for instance, your transverse axis, which is 10th Street; that is very important, indeed, and it is going to become more so. Consider also a contributory factor which isn't that at all but the immensity and length of the building--but it seems to some of us here it might be an invitation for even longer buildings. In other words, this would establish a precedent for extremely long buildings, walls of buildings where there are no interruptions except underneath. That you may dismiss as being purely hypothetical because those are not yet projected, but on the other hand, this is really in a sense the longest building and there's a question in my mind as to how the treatment may be made in repose to conform with the others.

Therefore, the suggestion is that the 10th Street Mall be recognized as such, as a thoroughfare. We know the building cannot be made transparent. No matter how much glass you put in there is only a reflective matter. And light.

If, therefore, if you were to take a vertical subdivision, including those three central supports, so that you have 70 feet there and that remains in our minds for the moment exactly as treated--glass--and two flanking elements relate to Washington, relate to the neighbors.

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Yes. All right, now, I am ready for the first criticism. Why do you complicate a simple thing? Why do you divide up in expression certain base of a building in one manner and another? Well, let's take an example we spoke of yesterday. It is not very pertinent but it's an example. When the State Department was constructed, we were all sitting here but it was an addition, was it not, to an existing one, designed on a vertical basis; the other was a new one, horizontal treatment. I call it rudely "machine gun." Well, that is what the modules are, and you have to put up with it and how do you treat it? Wally Harrison was here and the justification of those buildings became really quite an important matter. How do you run this horizontal thing brutally into an existing vertical thing, materials and all those things varying; so he invented the idea and it has been carried out. There's the connection--these two buildings come together with glass, which is a very great relief and still there is no contrast and it contributes to repose and common sense.

Therefore, while that is not an applicable example, nevertheless it is suggestive thought that here on your axis of 10th Street, which is continuous and where you have to go, actually, and get a special dispensation to span that street, you recognize it architecturally as being the lightest part of it--no weight on this street at all. Then you turn

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your attention to your neighbors. You turn your attention to Washington as a whole. Is Washington ready for that? Just a thought.

Then you have your central element of glass and you have your two flanking elements of a masonry treatment. These are suggestions, thought, all out loud.

MR. YASKO: Excellent.

MR. PERRY: Now, there was one other thought, for fear I may not have an opportunity again to speak, and that is this: I am worried to death about superstructure. We are all construction men--penhouses and screens--can anyone hold up his right hand today and say there will never be any unexpected but most unfortunate installations that may be required in this building that will stick up like the things you see all over Washington? Here is something that is very, very reassuring. Now, can you guarantee it?

MR. CURTIS: I think we can.

MR. PERRY: It is vital.

MR. YASKO: We can guarantee it until the day we turn it over to the agency.

MR. PERRY: This worries the Chairman over here and I am not sure we haven't learned a good deal from him. He wanted the silhouette of Washington a little less cluttered.

MR. YASKO: The trouble with buildings is users. Shouldn't have users.

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MR. YABKO: The trouble with buildings is never.

MR. PERRY: I could go on forever. I think this is a very remarkable, ingenious, stupendous job. I agree with Mr. Sasaki. The only question is the point of view.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Who is going to occupy this building--the military?

MR. YASKO: Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: You are sure there will be no landing field atop?

MR. YASKO: So far as I know, there will not. The safest way to assure that is to design a roof that will hold nothing heavier than 30 pounds.

Seriously, Mr. Finley, I see nothing in conversations we have had that indicates they have such plans.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: You cannot bind your successors. You have no idea what they are going to do.

MR. YASKO: No.

Whether we can exercise control through GSA as the so-called housekeepers, I don't know but we will certainly try.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: May I ask you another question. The size of this building in relation to the little buildings, the Smithsonian and National Gallery on the left down here, is enormous of course; and it's going to seem more so in the evening when the lights are on and there is a great blaze of lights down there. Can you give us a justification for a

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evening when the lights are on and there is a great blaze

of lights down there. Can you give us a justification for a

building of this size in that location? In other words, will you be able to reduce the occupation of temporary buildings in Washington by means of providing this enormous building here?

MR. YASKO: That seems to be the intention, Mr. Finley.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: But is it going to be carried out?

MR. YASKO: We are striving like everything.

Mr. Bouton has issued orders for deadlines on the temporaries. Our chief opposition to that, I understand, has retired from Congress and so perhaps it's already simpler. But Mr. Bouton has directed the buildings to be vacated by Defense upon the occupancy of F.O.B. 5. There are approximately nine tempos, the largest areas to be vacated by Defense, which means they will be vacated and will come down.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: I know Mr. Bouton's heart is in the right place about all this, but we have been assured to many times about the tempos and then nothing happens.

MR. YASKO: Mr. Kennedy has not only supported him but issued orders to Mr. Bouton, the man in charge of office space. Unless Congress puts a stop to him, this is the schedule of demolition: Tempos I, J, N, Currie Hall, Tempos G, E--there are many buildings to be vacated.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Does that include the tempo at the foot of the Washington Monument?

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CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Does that include the tempo at the

MR. YASKO: I don't know what number that is.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: That's the one I think should go first. I would like to look forward to Washington being rid of these dreadful buildings left over from the First and Second World Wars.

MR. YASKO: Our space people and building management are already making plans for vacating those areas.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: We will keep up hope then.

MR. YASKO: I think Mr. Bouton has put himself right out.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Oh, I know he wanted to do that, of course, but he has to have support from every direction to accomplish it.

Ralph, would you like to comment?

MR. WALKER: I am not quite sure about one detail and that is the division strip on which the window cleaner comes. Did you say that stuck out beyond--

MR. CURTIS: A foot and a half.

MR. WALKER: So, actually, the model does not represent--actually, you are going to get a whole series of vertical lines?

MR. CURTIS: Yes.

MR. WALKER: That will break up the pattern all over? I am a little concerned about the monotony. Living in New York, as I do, and realizing how uninteresting Park Avenue is

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becoming, building after building that is put up in glass. When Lever House was first done, everyone thought it was a very interesting job. I thought so, too. It was built on the idea of floating. It doesn't float. It is a misconception that you can have a building of this size and weight seem to float. I am very concerned about the monotony of 800 feet of motif like this, without some break in it somewhere.

It would seem to me to be almost deadly, and I think Mr. Finley's idea what is this thing going to look like at night--you know, most of these buildings are photographed--these glass buildings are photographed at night, and you see a blaze.

I guess Ford must have two or three covers of night pictures on them showing these glass buildings. I don't have any quarrel with the fact you will use some glass on this building. I agree with Mr. Perry but I do think that is a tremendous expanse of glass and these verticals will not play enough part in the thing to break that glass pattern.

It is the monotony that bothers me. I think the concept, the planning of the building--I don't mind the attempt to make it float at all--I think that concept is magnificent. In fact, I think we went along with you when you were here the last time on that. I think when I suggested that you do something to break up the monotony of this thing, it was not in relationship to the other buildings, but it was within itself; and I wondered whether a building with that much corridor going down

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without any interruption is going to be a pleasant place to be in.

MR. YASKO: You are talking about inside?

MR. WALKER: Inside. When I worked in the Commerce Building, I used to have to go outside sometimes to find out where I was. It's a long drink--I wonder whether without disrupting this general concept from here on (indicating on model), the space from here on might not be broken out a bit and some relationship also with something that did this (gesturing). I think it would be far more pleasant to look at.

Then if you could change the pattern--not necessarily go to stone--but change the pattern, you would get a much more interesting building.

MR. YASKO: I think what the architect is trying to do, or at least it's my reaction to it, is to attempt to do what you're concerned about, Mr. Walker--this expanse--and this is where the facets of the glass constantly changing are intended to break it up.

MR. WALKER: I think that may be very true on the south side and especially on the west--you might get a very disagreeable flash of light from them.

MR. YASKO: This is facing due north, as I understand it, so we are catching some sun in these directions. You get their play of form to relieve it, and that's one of the

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first things they attempted to do, which I believe with the mullions coming out can make some play in there, and some shadows that could be caused by this glass which again will introduce another plane to the facets.

MR. WALKER: I think if they were a little more prominent it would be a great help. The verticals.

MR. YASKO: A little more zing--that is a very good point.

MR. WALKER: But I do think the long unbroken extent of glass will not be very happy. I think most people now think of Park Avenue as deadly, deteriorated in quality and design over the old masonry buildings with frontispieces down to the first floor. Glass is ubiquitous. You see it everywhere.

MR. YASKO: Let me pose this onto you, Mr. Walker, in exploring that point of relief on that, what would your reaction be to an interplay at these various points, rather than a big physical break? Perhaps a shift of material, a variation in that rhythm that goes through there?

MR. WALKER: I think a break is an interesting thing to do in a building. I did Bell Telephone Laboratories. We have a corridor that extends from one end of the building to another building, I think 1700 feet long.

MR. YASKO: You ought to have a good track team.

MR. WALKER: Next time we did a laboratory, we broke

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MR. YASKO: Psychologically. The other one is a challenge--can I make that 50 miles?

MR. SASAKI: A comment on that point. Again, as I said, this scheme is very well thought out and I think one could see where their points could be defended, too, and there is some logic in having this (indicating on model) as a border which defines and unifies this area and then at the ground space where this thing falls through and enters there I think it is very good. I think I agree with you, Mr. Walker, where it jumps from one scale of the building of some 700 feet long to the smallest module which is the 10 b 13 feet facet; but I think in between there could be a scale and that could be the 60-foot scale of the column spacing or something which is another way of doing it, so there would be this total unit. So there is a way, I think, without breaking the whole mass.

There are alternate ways, I think. I think again because I know there has been considerable discussion on the matter of getting new expression here on the Washington scene, getting good architecture and buildings, I think all of us here are as concerned; we would like to see this done, but then when you look at the total Washington picture, you find certain districts, commercial district, so-called monumental district--now in the Southwest renewal area, I think there are

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many attempts to get newer sort of expression, mostly in a residential scale and I think a lot of attention is given there in the design of various units and various projects, but then the total area, within the total area--now, Payne has been working quite considerably in that area and he will be working in the L'Enfant Plaza which ties directly with this. From all the schemes we have been able to see on Payne's solution, again it will be a masonry thing. Again, good. This should be so. Your masonry here which I think is extremely handsome--to come to this one unit which again stands so starkly different, I think that in many ways looking at it not from the building alone but from the total Washington point of view, I think it really would be a mistake.

Now I can cite many examples where this kind of thing has happened where there is general harmony and one building stands out in contrast. Actually, it stands out as a sore thumb. This is one of the basic problems which I think exist in architecture, when it is judged within the total urban context and the basic problem of architecture as it is emerging: Can your building designs really harmonize or contrast I don't care but anyway, work together within a total context when very frequently the city in many parts is so old it is a problem of fitting a new building into an old context.

I think the Europeans face this more than in this city. They face it more in their cities. I think Washington

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is a very special case and whether we agree with the total masonry concept or no, I think it's there for us to face, so again I think- there's no criticism of this solution as such, or the ability of the architects. I think the architects could solve this problem very well.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Gentlemen, we are getting behind on our schedule very much. Would you like to say something, Mr. Hurd?

MR. HURD: As usual, I in this case defer to my learned colleagues in architecture. I think what they say is very true. I think this is a wonderful solution the way it provides a park and spans the street and would be very effective here, as a building spans Park Avenue with an arcade there. I am all for that variation. I sort of wonder about all that glass but don't know what you can do.

MR. de WELDON: The only technical point about the glass windows is an airconditioning problem in summer, by only allowing reflected light to come in through the lower plane. The reflected light does not reflect the infra-red rays. You can keep the building very cool. It means you shade the other three planes and let the light come in only through the lower planes.

MR. YASKO: Mr. Finley, would you allow Mr. Curtis to close? I think he has some answers to some specific questions.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Well, we could give him maybe

question.

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MR. YASNO: Mr. Winley, would you allow Mr. Gurtis

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187
two or three minutes.

MR. PERRY: I have a small two-cents' worth. I have been listening with great attention to the suggestions for breaking up this building and wondered how that could be made a practical suggestion. Can you sometimes make a break in the structure? What my two cents' worth consists of, the relationship of this building in its length to the ancient classical buildings which had the portico in the center and the shadow there and the flanking wings so that the expression that you are speaking of is that circulation, people coming into a portico, a deep accented portico without a break or with a break, but normally in those days with a break; and then flanking very similar wings.

Reverting to the thought that I had of giving the appearance of a very light building over the circulation and then of treating the flanking elements with masonry so it appeared like smaller elements, as you came down the street, and reflected the existing buildings and stayed within the family of Washington tradition.

I was wondering whether all the remarks that Mr. Walker and Mr. Sasaki made in this connection might not have some bearing on that solution?

MR. WALKER: I'd like to make one more comment and that is, being a member of this Pennsylvania Avenue Council, I am terribly afraid this is going to establish a precedent for that

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MR. WALKER: I'd like to make one more comment and
that is, being a member of this Pennsylvania Avenue Council, I
terribly afraid this is going to establish a precedent for the

Avenue, as well. That would be rather hard. If we go along too radically in this respect--I'd just like to have you consider the fact this is not only related to Independence Avenue but it is related also to Pennsylvania Avenue.

MR. YASKO: We are very conscious of it.

CHAIRMAN FINLEY: Mr. Curtis, we would like to hear from you very shortly if you would, because we have a group waiting outside.

MR. CURTIS: I feel I should almost apologize for even saying what I am going to say, because I am not sure I have the right to even question some of the things these gentlemen said; but I think we can express an opinion.

First, the length of the corridors in the plan, this does not happen. The corridors do not go all the way through. I don't think we should put the shade back on, but the corridors occur from here to here and here to here (indicating on drawing), on either side; and then in the middle go across this way so you don't look the whole distance down a corridor.

MR. WALKER: Are you sure that is going to happen?

MR. CURTIS: Yes. The flexibility will not be in the corridor. The corridor partitions will be permanent partitions. The spaces on either side of the corridors won't be. But this is a minor point. The most important thing that I want to say is this: What is Washington architecture? It seems to me it is almost stylish today to criticize the

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25 April 1963

Dear Mr. Routin:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on April 17, gave further consideration to the designs for Federal Office Building No. 5, which is to be located on the south side of Independence Avenue at 10th Street, S.W. The presentation of the 1/16" scale drawings and a model of the building, as designed by the associated firms of Curtis and Davis, Fordyce and Hamby Associates, and Frank Grad Sons, Architects and Engineers, was made by Mr. Nathaniel C. Curtis, Jr., of the firm of Curtis and Davis. Mr. Karel Yasko and Mr. J. Roland Snyder, represented the Public Buildings Service.

The Commission found the basic arrangement and massing of the proposed building satisfactory. This arrangement would consist of three major elements: two wings flanking 10th Street, varying in height from one story at Independence Avenue to four stories along 10th Street; and a single six story mass, parallel to Independence Avenue, raised on columns some thirty feet above grade and bridging both lower wings and the 10th Street right-of-way.

The architects of the project were commended for this conception when it was first presented as a mass study in December 1961. The Commission stressed at that time that this arrangement of the building masses was considered particularly appropriate because it respected the Mall by continuing its enframing by buildings, as opposed to an earlier scheme which had emphasized the opening of a new axis along 10th Street. The Commission's concern was then, and continues to be, the degree to which this large building would complete the monumental composition of the Mall system at the Independence Avenue side. The site plan and general massing of the most recent presentation of the future building represented a further development of the earlier plans and as such was approved. However, the proposed architectural treatment of the elevations, especially of the longer mass parallel to Independence Avenue and bridging 10th Street was considered to be fundamentally unsuited to this particular area.

As presently designed, the elevations of this mass would consist entirely of glass, the surface being faceted in a pyramidal form with the apex projecting away from the face of the building and supported by a series of narrow aluminum

rods tied to a secondary structural frame. In the words of the architect, this system of enclosing space would be entirely unique and would make a complete departure from all other buildings in Washington. The Commission felt that the basic question to be determined, however, was not one of uniqueness of individual design but of appropriateness in terms of context of the building's setting and of its relation to other important buildings in the area and to the plan of the Mall, itself. The Commission's considered position is that the context should be the overriding factor in all respects of this design. In their opinion the resulting impact of the proposed elevations would seriously disrupt the continuity of this important area of the city, and they disapproved the architectural design as presently proposed.

The Commission strongly recommends that new studies be made with a greater emphasis on solid elements in the development of the facade. In addition, the use of masonry elements is to be encouraged over metals, which again have little relation to the character of other major structures in the vicinity.

The Commission believes that it is entirely possible to develop these new studies concurrently with the development of plans and engineering drawings for the remainder of the project and need not unreasonably delay the schedule of construction. On the other hand, whatever time is necessary to arrive at an appropriate solution to this problem should be taken. Federal Office Building No. 5 is too important, both in itself and in its relation to the city, for any other course of action to be followed.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Honorable Bernard Boutin
Administrator
General Services Administration
Washington 25, D.C.

[illegible]

The Commission strongly recommends that the United States Government should continue to support the efforts of the United Nations to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem, and that it should continue to support the efforts of the United Nations to bring about a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus problem.

The Commission believes that it is entirely possible to have a study conducted by the Commission of the various aspects of the problem of the treatment of the mentally ill. The Commission is of the opinion that the study should be conducted by the Commission and not by the State Department. The Commission is of the opinion that the study should be conducted by the Commission and not by the State Department. The Commission is of the opinion that the study should be conducted by the Commission and not by the State Department.

For the City of New York

100-443887-100

24 April 1963

Dear Mr. Wirth:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on April 17, considered the proposed design for the bronze statue and site plan of the Taras Shevchenko Memorial, which is to be located on U.S. Reservation 360, at 22d, 23d and P Streets, N.W. Mr. Leo Mol and Mr. Radoslav Zuk, sculptor and architect of the project respectively, made the presentation. Professor Lev Bobriansky represented the Shevchenko Memorial Committee and Mr. Robert Horne and Mr. Sutton Jett represented the National Park Service.

Two site plans were presented for review. One showed the triangular site separated into a number of paved areas that were screened by planting from the adjoining streets, and provided views of the statue essentially from within the park; the other was a more open plan, with less paving and planted areas, which would afford views of the memorial from the bordering roads and adjacent walks.

The members of the Commission favored the more open plan. They found that it had greater unity and was better adapted to the irregular shape of the site. Low planting elements could be added along P Street on the south side if additional separation between the roadway and the street is desired, but no extensive screening type planting should be used. The design should be kept simple and free of vertical elements other than the statue, which, together with the adjacent stele, provides the focus of the composition.

The character of both the statue and the stele were thought to be commendable and were approved as presented. As is customary, however, the Commission requests that the larger scale studies, which follow in the development of the design and show additional detail, be submitted for review prior to final casting.

A copy of the site plan which was used informally at the meeting to illustrate possible changes to planting and walkways is attached for the information of the architect.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Honorable Conrad Wirth
Director
National Park Service
Washington 25, DC

David E. Finley
Chairman

10 May 1963

Dear Mr. Wirth:

I am writing in regard to a proposal to install handrails on the flights of steps leading to the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, which the Commission considered at its meeting on April 17, at the request of Mr. T. Sutton Jett, Regional Director of the National Capital Region.

The Commission finds the desirability of adding new elements to designs of these memorials, which are essentially complete, to be somewhat doubtful. On the other hand, the concern of the National Park Service to prevent accidents which occur from time to time to persons using the steps to visit the memorials is understandable. The effectiveness of the proposed railings in reducing these accidents, many of which occur in daytime, is at least open to question, and must be weighed against possible negative effects on the architectural design of the memorials.

In the opinion of the Commission, a simple and dignified metal railing of classical design, such as those installed on the steps at the entrance to Constitution Hall at 18th and "C" Streets, N.W. would probably be the least objectionable of the many types available. The situation at Constitution Hall is comparable in some respects, and it offers an opportunity to ascertain to some extent the effect of similar railings on the appearance of the two memorials.

The Commission strongly recommends against the provision of illumination within the railings, such as was illustrated in the full size mockup presented at the meeting. Not only does the lighting fixture encumber the design of the railing itself, but more importantly, the resulting pattern of lighting would have a far reaching effect on the appearance of the memorial at night. As was stated in our letter of September 20, 1962, the Commission is not opposed to the careful lighting of the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials but does believe that any attempt to do so must be considered as a matter of design of the whole and not of piecemeal elements taken one at a time.

The relation of the railing and baluster structure to the sight lines of the columns of the two memorials as one approaches the entrance, and also to the paving pattern, stone joints, etc., would have to be carefully considered when locating such rails.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

Honorable Conrad Wirth
Director
National Park Service
Washington 25, D.C.

David E. Finley
Chairman

EXHIBIT C

19 April 1963

Dear General Clarke:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at its meeting on April 17th, considered the design for the new harbor facilities to be provided for the docking of Police and Fire Department boats at the pier along the Maine Avenue Waterfront at "N" Street, S.W. Mr. G.A. Purcell, Liaison Officer, Department of Buildings and Grounds, presented the drawings.

The members of the Commission were favorably impressed with the designs and approved them as presented. Despite the utilitarian nature of the building, the architectural treatment showed a degree of refinement that is not usually associated with such programs. The outcome of this project, of course, will depend largely on the development of the details in the same manner of simplicity that was shown on the drawings. If this is done, and care is also shown in the selection of colors and finishes, the completed building will have made the effort entirely worthwhile.

The Commission would also like to commend Mr. Purcell on the quality of drawings presented at the meeting.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

David E. Finley
Chairman

Brigadier General F.J. Clarke
Engineer Commissioner for the
District of Columbia
District Building
Washington 4, D.C.

Copy to: Mr. J.A. Blaser, Director,
Dept. of Buildings and Grounds

